



London postal workers strike

20 July 1996
A London post box is shown with its slots closed Thursday, as mail deliveries were halted throughout Britain when workers at the Royal Mail, the first postal service to issue stamps, staged their third strike in a long-running dispute over wages and working conditions and threatened another 36-hour walkout. The government said it will abolish the Royal Mail's monopoly on letter delivery if the workers make good on their threat.

Survivors recall postal massacre

By LIBBY QUAID
Associated Press Writer

EDMOND, Okla. — Postal clerk Vesta McNulty has worked every Aug. 20 for the past 10 years. She makes a point of it.

She was there on the summer morning in 1986 when a part-time mail carrier walked into Edmond's main post office and opened fire — killing 14 co-workers and wounding six others before shooting himself in the head.

Returning the day after Patrick Henry Sherrill's rampage may have been the most difficult of all. "If I hadn't come back then, I probably would never have come back," she says.

Many survivors make it a tradition to work on the anniversary of the siege, which until the Oklahoma City bombing was the deadliest one-day attack in state history.

Families of some victims plan to lay a wreath at the post office's memorial fountain on Tuesday. Other workers will pause for a moment, as they have in years past, to remember the friends they lost.

Ernie Bingham has also worked every Aug. 20 since the shooting. He had been sorting letters for less than an hour when Sherrill walked in that morning. The attack shattered his sense of security.

"What you think is a safe place isn't," said Bingham, who now manages the city's other post office.

Police handling of the case drew criticism and some lawsuits, which were later dismissed. Officers were reluctant to storm the building because they thought they had a hostage situation. When they went in about 1 1/2 hours later, they found 15 bodies, including Sherrill.

Some blamed the U.S. Postal



AP Photo

Ernie Bingham and Vesta McNulty stand in the lobby of the Edmond, Okla., post office in this July photo. The two recalled the day, 10 years ago, that

Patrick Sherrill entered the post office and killed 14 of his co-workers. Both Bingham and McNulty were working on that day.

Service for promoting a working environment in which tension escalated with mail volume. Managers were also blamed for increasing pressure on workers.

Sherrill was upset that day about the most recent evaluation in his troubled career with the Postal Service.

In 1982, he had quit rather than be fired from his job as a clerk in the Oklahoma City office. His

record went undetected when he was hired three years later in Edmond, where supervisors also tried to fire him for continual infractions.

"They were putting pressure on him to improve his performance, to be the best carrier he could be. Those are worthy goals, but the methods they used, belittling him, I just perceive it was mishandled," said former letter carrier Mike Bigler.

He said Sherrill made "normal mistakes," like taking too long for lunch.

Bigler, 46, was shot in the back that morning but was able to return to work the next day. The bullet pierced the flesh on his right shoulder blade and exited about eight inches to the left.

He now works for General Motors and runs a prison ministry with his wife.

Postal Inspectors Rank Year's Mail Fraud Complaints

30 Oct 1996

For National Consumers' Week, Postal Inspectors have tallied the year's mail fraud complaints and inquiries to identify the year's biggest scams.

Altogether, an astounding 416,216 complaints were received and processed by the Postal Inspection Service. Using this vast store of knowledge of current and unpopular scams, Postal Inspectors have ranked them to form a list of the five biggest lies told consumers!

Postal Inspectors are targeting this "Hit Parade" of scams for elimination through strong enforcement and prevention campaigns, especially this week, and yarn consumers to not fall for these lies, no matter how appealing.

Five Biggest Lies Told To Consumers

1. You are a guaranteed winner of one of five valuable prizes! This scheme invites you to fork over big trucks to buy chemically inert Vitamins, cheap home security alarm systems and water purifiers, or contribute to a bogus charity before you get the booby prize.

2. "This chain letter is perfectly legal!" Everyone receives this pitch sooner or later, but does anyone really get rich by par-

ticipating? Once you've paid for copying, postage, and a mailing list, this is one of life's biggest losers. Also, chain letters that ask for money are a type of lottery and are illegal when sent through the U.S. mail.

3. "Stuff envelopes at home and earn BIG \$\$\$!" If it were this easy, we would all be home stuffing envelopes. Typically, the person making this offer is going to sell you a "plan" to do exactly what he's doing. Save your money.

4. Your humble assistance is highly solicited in transferring millions of dollars, available from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company, to share with you good self. All we need is your bank account number. This scam, once aimed at business owners, is now targeting consumers. If you believe this one, you'll believe in the tooth fairy.

5. "You've been selected to receive a fabulous vacation!" Instead of a dream vacation; however, these offers lead to your worst nightmare with scheduling problems, shabby hotels, non-existent cruises, and fly-by-night airlines. And all you were worried about was losing your

luggage. How about losing your shirt?

Consumers are cautioned to resist these enticing offers. Instead, first check out the firm making the offer or seek advice based on the type of offer being made. Often the company has no track record of complaints, but the scam is familiar to watchdogs.

Postal Inspectors say they, and the nation's many consumer protection agencies, stand ready to offer useful tips to identify offers which may be fraudulent. Most are only a local phone call away and all are anxious to help.

CPSC Warns That The Deadly Threat of Carbon Monoxide Can Be Stopped By a Yearly Professional Inspection

Having your home inspected each year at the beginning of the heating season can help avoid deadly carbon monoxide gas, from leaking into your home, according to Chairman Ann Brown of the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"CO poisoning from the use of

fuel burning appliances kills at least 200 people each year and sends more than 5,000 to hospital emergency rooms for treatment," Brown said. "Consumers can avoid this tragedy by having their fuel-burning appliances inspected by a qualified technician each year, and by purchasing and installing CO detectors that meet the requirements of the Oct. 1, 1995, Underwriters Laboratories standards."

CO is a colorless, odorless gas produced by burning any fuel. The initial symptoms of CO poisoning are similar to the flu, and include dizziness, fatigue, headache, nausea and irregular breathing. High level exposure to CO can cause death.

"Modern heating equipment is sophisticated and requires special training and tools for proper maintenance," Brown said. "CPSC recommends that consumers should not service their own appliances, but instead have a qualified professional perform an inspection."

A yearly inspection of your home by a professional should include a careful look at the following sources of carbon monoxide:

- Furnaces, hot water heaters and stoves. If they burn natural gas, heating oil, wood or other kinds of fuel, these appliances are potential sources of CO.

- Chimneys, flues and vents.

received reports that high temperature plastic venting (HTPV) pipes - which are used in mid-efficiency appliances - may separate or crack. This could allow CO from the furnace to enter a home. The CPSC is currently investigating this problem. Homeowners with a gas-fired mid-efficiency furnace or boiler installed between 1987 and 1993 should have them inspected for cracking or separating.

- Improper ventilation. Make sure that your appliances have adequate ventilation. A supply of fresh air is important to help carry pollutants up the chimney, stovepipe or flue, and is necessary for the complete combustion of any fuel.

Finally, consumers should be aware that charcoal grills can also be a potential source of CO. Never use charcoal grills in enclosed spaces such as a home, garage, vehicle or tent, and never bring grills with live coals indoors after use. Never use Charcoal grills as an indoor heat source.

"Carbon monoxide is a deadly threat, but it can be avoided by having a yearly professional inspection of your home fuel burning appliances and by installing a CO detector that meets the most recent UL standards," Brown said.



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